

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. - 4. (canceled):

5. (new): Sealing device (10) intended for providing a sealing between an aperture of an enclosure (7) and the outer surface of a nuclear fuel rod cladding (1) inserted through said aperture, wherein said sealing device comprises a retractable and inflatable member having three states:

- a state retracted for contactless insertion of said nuclear fuel rod cladding (1) through the aperture,

- a state inflated at a moderate pressure for providing said sealing while enabling axial and/or rotational movement of said nuclear fuel rod cladding, and

- a state inflated at a higher pressure for providing said sealing while said nuclear fuel rod cladding is at rest.

6. (new): The sealing device as claimed in claim 5, comprising a support (12) crossed by a channel extending between an inlet and an outlet of said aperture, for allowing insertion of said nuclear fuel rod cladding, said retractable and inflatable member comprising an elastomer tubular membrane (8), extending along said channel, this membrane (8) having two end parts acting as leak tight attachment to said support (12), its inner diameter being, in free state, slightly

smaller than the outside diameter of said fuel cladding (1), and said sealing device further comprises a leak tight chamber located between the support (12) and the elastomer tubular membrane (8), and arranged so that the elastomer tubular membrane may be deformed in the radial direction inwards into said chamber or outwards against the nuclear fuel rod cladding (1), a gas supply system (14) being provided to inflate or deflate the membrane (8).

7. (new): The sealing device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the elastomer tubular membrane (8) is sized so that, in free state, said membrane is in leak tight sliding contact with said nuclear fuel rod cladding (1) for axial and/or rotational nuclear fuel rod cladding movement.

8. (new): The sealing device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the elastomer tubular membrane (8) presents an axial inner section that, in free state, is decreasing from one end to its midplane and increasing towards its second end.

9. (new): The sealing device as claimed in claim 7, wherein the elastomer tubular membrane (8) presents an axial inner section that, in free state, is decreasing from one end to its midplane and increasing towards its second end.